

Message Text

SECRET

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ORIGIN SS-15

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO WHITE HOUSE IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T STATE 177845

EXDIS PASS TO SECRETARY AT CAMP DAVID

FOLLOWING IS REPEAT BEIRUT 6375, SENT SECSTATE 18 JULY:

QUOTE S E C R E T BEIRUT 6375

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINS, LE, AEMR

SUBJECT: VISIT TO MARONITE SECTOR

REF: STATE 177762

1. I APPRECIATE CONSIDERATIONS THAT HAVE LED TO DEPT'S CONCLUSION THAT

I SHOULD NOT RPT NOT VISIT MARONITE SECTOR FROM CPYRUS AFTER MY DEPARTURE FROM WEST BEIRUT. IN THIS CONNECTION, HOWEVER, I SHOULD REPORT CONVERSATION I JUST HAD ON TELEPHONE WITH CHARLES MALIK IN JOUNIE. (TELEPHONE HAS BEEN OPERATING FOR SEVERAL DAYS IN ROW.) I HAD CALLED MALIK TO OBTAIN HIS ASSISTANCE IN GETTING 100 PER CENT ASSURANCES FROM MARONITE LEADERS THAT THEY WILL HOLD THEIR FIRE ON DAY WE EVACUATE.

2. AFTER I HAD EXPLAINED TO MALIK, AS I HAVE TO EVERYONE ELSE, THAT

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SECURITY CONDITIONS HAVE NOT PERMITTED ME TO VISIT THAT SECTOR, HE

SAID THAT I SHOULD OF COURSE TAKE NO RISKS. HOWEVER, MARONITE LEADERS NOT FIND MEANS TO TRANSPORT ITS AMBASSADOR OVER TO MARONITE SIDE. AT MINIMUM I COULD COME IN FROM CYPRUS. I TOLD MALIK THAT I WOULD CONTINUE TO LOOK FOR WAYS OF MAKING VISIT. IN MEANTIME, IN ORDER TO ESTABLISH AS EARLY CONTACT AS POSSIBLE, I MIGHT DISPATCH SUB-ORDINATE OFFICER.

3. MALIK SAID THAT SENDING ANYONE BELOW MY LEVEL WOULD NOT RPT NOT BE VIEWD FAVORABLY BY MARONITE LEADERS. THEY WOULD CONSIDER THIS LESS THAN EVEN-HANDED. HE STRONGLY URGED THAT EVERY EFFORT BE MADE TO GET ME OVER THERE. HE CHARACTERIZED SECTOR AS COMPLETELY SAFE AND SECURE AND SAID THAT WE SHOULD HAVE NO CONCERNS ON THAT SCORE.

4. COMMENT: I SUGGEST THAT WE MAY WISH TO KEEP OPEN POSSIBILITY OF MY GOING INTO MARONITE SECTOR FROM CYPRUS AND MAKE FINAL DECISION ONCE I HAVE ARRIVED IN ATHENS (OR WHEREVER). AT THAT TIME WE MAY HAVE BETTER FEEL TO WHAT EXTENT MY GOING THERE WILL FURTHER CONTRIBUTE TO BELIEF THAT U.S. IS COLLABORATING WITH MARONITES AND SYRIANS IN "PLOT" AGAINST MOSLEM LEBANON. LEBANESE PERSONALITIES HERE CERTAINLY UNDERSTAND THAT I HAVE OBLIGATION TO TALK TO CHRISTIAN LEADERS. ALSO I HAVE NO CONCERNS ABOUT MY SAFETY IN WHAT IS NOW PRETTY SECURE MARONITE ZONE. OBVIOUSLY, WE MUST BALANCE OFF UNDERSIRABILITY OF CONTRIBUTING FURTHER TO MYTHOLOGY OF OUR COLLABORATION WITH MARONITES VERSUS NEED TO GET IN CONTACT WITH MARONITE LEADERS--AND IN THE PROCESS, PERHAPS, URGE THEM TO COME OFF THEIR HIGH HORSE. SEELYE UNQUOTE. ROBINSON

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